



Benefits of the Transportation Pollution Reduction Planning Standards for the Great Outdoors

OVERVIEW

The new pollution reduction planning standards for transportation are meant to help Colorado reach its goals of lowering emissions while simultaneously giving travelers more choices. Long term, this will mean not just action to mitigate climate change but also cleaner air and water and support of healthier lifestyles through cycling, transit, and walking. It will also help the state manage congestion as it continues to grow.

WHAT DOES THE RULE DO?

The standards apply only to CDOT and to the state's five metropolitan planning organizations, the entities that draw up long-term transportation plans for their respective regions. The rule is designed to focus on large projects in the state's urban areas: Denver, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Greeley, Pueblo, and the Grand Junction.

The standards set greenhouse gas emission reduction levels over the next several decades, with differing targets for differing regions. Because the rule only applies to "regionally significant" projects, routine maintenance projects such as fixing bridges and repaving roads won't be affected.

If the region cannot meet its emissions reduction targets, it can focus on mitigation strategies such as:

- *The addition of transit resources (infrastructure/service/funding),*
- *Encouraging equitable transit-oriented development,*
- *Improving pedestrian and bike access/resources,*
- *Emission reductions on construction projects,*
- *Improving first- and final-mile connections to transit, and*
- *Encouraging more efficient vertical land use and parking.*

By establishing the pollution reduction value of these types of projects ahead of time, the rule makes it easier to include them in plans both from the outset and as mitigation features in major projects.

BENEFITS:

TOTAL SOCIAL BENEFITS:

A cost-benefit analysis by CDOT shows that the net present value of total social benefits that would be seen under the rule is roughly \$8 billion in the 2026-2030 timeframe and \$17 billion between 2031 and 2040. The most substantial benefits are from reduced crashes and reduced vehicle operating costs, resulting from reduced vehicle miles traveled. But many other benefits would be seen, including reduced fuel and maintenance costs for businesses and individuals and reduced vehicle ownership costs for things such as depreciation, insurance, license and registration fees, and finance charges. Further, the rule is likely to spur greater downtown and main street revitalization as well as increased access to jobs.

CDOT AND PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS:

The practical effect of this rule on planning efforts and real-life applications will mean more of what CDOT and planning organizations have been striving for, which is increased use of managed lanes, increased public transit, and increased multimodal and micro transit options. For example, CDOT's Bustang network fits into this framework well as does its upcoming Pegasus service that will connect I-70 corridor communities by using mountain Express Lanes that Bustang vehicles cannot access. And the rule will mean greater adoption of bike lanes and mobility hubs that allow people to access first- and last-mile travel options.



TRAVELERS:

Travelers will benefit from reductions in vehicle operating costs as a result of expanded travel options (e.g., transit service, tele-travel, walking and bicycling), travel time savings, and the need to use personal vehicles less because of being provided with more options through state and regional transportation planning. The rule will also reduce economic costs associated with carbon emissions, air pollution, motor vehicle crashes (road safety), and the health consequences of physical inactivity.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Colorado's new greenhouse gas rule will help our state's largest communities reduce their emissions while increasing sustainable, efficient forms of transportation and promoting healthy lifestyles. The rule will encourage communities in coming decades to move toward lower vehicle miles traveled while simultaneously increasing transportation options that will include transit, carpooling, bicycling, and first- and last-mile links.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY:

The new greenhouse gas rule is likely to have a favorable impact on the outdoor industry as communities move to build more trails and bike paths that connect to large outdoor spaces. It will also help maintain and further build a culture of outdoor activity in Colorado, whether that's someone buying a new bicycle because they can now commute in protected bike lanes or the benefits that mountain communities will see from I-70 corridor Express Lanes and Pegasus buses that help deliver urban dwellers to recreation areas with less congestion and pollution. This is to say nothing of cleaner air and reduced impacts of climate change that will help keep Colorado wild and vibrant and a must-see destination for tourists for generations to come.

BUSINESSES:

Businesses are also expected to benefit through congestion reduction that saves travel time for "on-the-clock" business travel, and reduced health care costs for employees as a result of reduced air pollution, motor vehicle crashes, and physical inactivity. They may also experience increased worker retention and satisfaction as a result of employees having expanded commute or work from home options. Also, policies that facilitate and reward downtown density tend to have a markedly positive impact on "main street" small businesses such as restaurants and locally owned retail.

COLORADANS:

All Coloradans will benefit from the new standards in the form of climate change mitigation and cleaner air. Meanwhile, for the nearly 90 percent of Coloradans who live in urban areas, the rule also means fewer car crashes, savings in fuel and car ownership, more options for bicycling and walking, and revitalized streetscapes.

